

S530 Master Seminar in Agricultural Economics

Winter term 2026/27

I. Type of seminar

In this seminar, students will apply econometric tools in the context of agricultural economics to conduct quantitative empirical research and write a seminar paper. The topic can either be selected from the list of suggested topics or proposed by the students themselves. In the latter case, its suitability will be discussed with the supervisor.

Throughout the seminar, students will acquire the essential skills required to write a quantitative thesis. This process will be supported by a mandatory workshop on academic research, a mandatory workshop on presentation skills, and mandatory short presentations in which students present the current status of their research (“research plan presentation”). In addition, active participation in discussions and constructive interaction among students are expected throughout the seminar.

As this is not a programming course, students are expected to have **solid skills in statistical software**. They should also be willing to **independently familiarize themselves** with new methods and approaches. The supervisor will provide guidance and support throughout this process.

II. Seminar admission

Registration via Alma until 11 October 2026. Prior attendance in the course *Econometric Essentials for Applied Empirical Research* is recommended but not mandatory.

III. Suggested topics and introductory reading material

Topic 1: Current developments in an agricultural land market of your choice

Pick a country/region of your choice and present current developments in its agricultural land market. Choose it based on your interest, but make sure that enough data are available for the descriptive and empirical analysis. Write a short scientific study including

- a section where you introduce the country, provide some informative statistics about the country and/or its farmland market, point out the relevance of the topic, and refer to the literature;
- a descriptive analysis with a presentation of collected relevant data in at least one own map and at least one own graph;
- an empirical analysis where you try to explain the ongoing developments.

Literature

- S Rosen (1974). Hedonic Prices and Implicit Markets: Product Differentiation in Pure Competition. *Journal of Political Economy* 82(1): 34–55. <https://doi.org/10.1086/260169>.
- H Huang, GY Miller, BJ Sherrick, MI Gomez (2006). Factors Influencing Illinois Farmland Values. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 88(2): 458–470. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8276.2006.00871.x>.
- CJ Nickerson, W Zhang (2014). Modeling the Determinants of Farmland Values in the United States. In: JM Duke, J Wu (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Land Economics*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199763740.013.005>.

Data

Publicly available datasets

Topic 2: Exploration of land use patterns based on the harmonized IACS inventory

The Harmonized IACS inventory of Europe-LAND is a harmonized collection of data from the Geospatial Aid (GSA) system of the Integrated Control and Administration System (IACS), which manages and controls agricultural subsidies in the European Union. The GSA data are a unique data source with field-level information on land use that is annually generated. The data carry information on crops grown per field, a unique identifier of the subsidy applicants that allows aggregation of fields to farms, and information on organic cultivation and animal numbers per farm. Pick an available country/region of your choice and explore land use patterns. Write a short scientific study including

- a section where you introduce the country, provide some informative statistics about the country and/or its land use patterns, point out the relevance of the topic, and refer to the literature;
- a descriptive analysis with a presentation of collected relevant data in at least one own map and at least one own graph;
- an empirical analysis where you try to explain the observed land use patterns.

Literature

- H Leonhardt, M Wesemeyer, A Eder, S Hüttel, T Lakes, H Schaak, S Seifert, S Wolff (2024). Use Cases and scientific potential of land use data from the EU's Integrated Administration and Control System: A systematic mapping review. *Ecological Indicators* 167: 112709. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2024.112709>.
- S Wolff, S Hüttel, C Nendel, T Lakes (2021). Agricultural Landscapes in Brandenburg, Germany: An Analysis of Characteristics and Spatial Patterns. *International Journal of Environmental Research* 15: 487–507. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41742-021-00328-y>.

Data

Harmonized IACS inventory: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14230620>

Students are invited to propose their own topics.

IV. Dates

Until 11 October 2026	Online application via Alma
13 October 2026, 10–12	Kick-off and topic assignment (mandatory)
TBA	<i>The schedule of the regular meetings (mandatory and optional) will be announced after the course start.</i>
15 December 2026	Term paper is due by noon (12 p.m. s.t.)
TBA	<i>The schedule of the regular meetings (mandatory and optional) will be announced after the course start.</i>
26 January 2027 and 02 February 2027	Final presentations (mandatory)

V. Course credits

Students can obtain course credit (9 ECTS). To obtain course credit, students must meet the following criteria:

- Students participate in all mandatory meetings.
- Students submit their 12-page thesis on time.
- Students present their thesis during the seminar.
- Students actively participate during the seminar.

The final grade consists of 50% from the thesis and 50% from the presentation and seminar participation.

Tübingen, August 2026